

In the claims:

1. (Currently amended) A set of instruments of progressively smaller sizes adapted for use in performing root canal therapy [~~wherein each of the instruments comprises~~] comprising:

said set of instruments consisting of first, second and third endodontic instruments;

each endodontic instrument has an elongated shaft including a proximal end and a distal end; and

[a] each endodontic instrument of said set of instruments has a relatively short, enlarged, continuously tapered working length formed on the shaft adjacent to the distal end of said shaft, said working length being tapered from its upper end to its lower end, having a diameter at its upper end that is greater than the diameter of said shaft throughout the length of the remainder of said shaft, said working length is [~~and a length no longer than about~~] 3 millimeters and [~~including~~] has multiple cutting edges [~~formed by multiple flutes thereon~~], the distal end of [~~said working length of~~] each instrument is a bi-conical shape for guiding the distal end and the short enlarged continuously tapered working length of the instrument in the direction of the root canal axis and wherein said cutting edges [~~and flutes~~] are parallel to the axis of each instrument, wherein said cutting edges permit clockwise or counter-clockwise rotation of said instruments while shaping a root canal and wherein at least one cutting edge on said working length runs from said bi-conical shape to the upper end of said working length, wherein each endodontic instrument in said set has an identical rate of taper and wherein the working lengths of said second and third endodontic instruments are smaller than said first endodontic instrument.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Canceled).

4. (Canceled).

5. (Original) The set of instruments of claim 1 wherein each instrument has three cutting edges on the short enlarged continuously tapered working length thereof formed by three flutes thereon.

6. (Original) The set of instruments of claim 1 wherein each instrument has six cutting edges on the short enlarged continuously tapered working length thereof formed by three flutes thereon.

7. (Original) The set of instruments of claim 1 wherein the cross-sectional shape of the short enlarged continuously tapered working length of each instrument is triangular with concave sides, triangular, square or polygonal.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Canceled).

10. (Canceled).

11. (Canceled).

12. (Currently amended) A method of performing root canal therapy comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a set of instruments consisting of first, second and third endodontic instruments, each instrument having an elongated shaft including a proximal end and a distal end and a relatively short, enlarged, continuously tapered working length formed on the shaft adjacent to the distal end of said shaft, said working length being tapered from its upper end to its lower end, having a diameter at its upper end that is greater than the diameter of said shaft throughout the length of the remainder of said shaft, said working length is [and a length no longer than about] 3 millimeters and including multiple cutting edges [~~formed by multiple flutes thereon~~], the distal end of [~~said working length of~~] each instrument is a bi-conical shape for guiding the distal end and the short enlarged continuously tapered working length of the instrument in the direction of the root canal axis and wherein said cutting edges [~~and flutes~~] are parallel to the axis of each instrument, wherein said cutting edges permit clockwise or counter-clockwise rotation of said instruments while shaping a root canal and wherein at least one cutting

edge on said working length runs from said bi-conical shape to the upper end of said working length, wherein each endodontic instrument in said set has an identical rate of taper and wherein the working lengths of said second and third endodontic instruments are smaller than said first endodontic instrument;

(b) inserting [a] said first instrument in the coronal portion of the root canal and rotating the instrument to enlarge the coronal portion into a continuous taper of a size corresponding to the continuously tapered working length of the first instrument;

(c) inserting [a] said second instrument in the root canal and rotating the instrument to thereby enlarge the root canal in a portion of the root canal beyond the coronal portion thereof into a continuous taper of a size corresponding to the continuously tapered working length of said second instrument, the continuously tapered working length of said second instrument having a smaller average diameter than the average diameter of the continuously tapered working length of said first instrument; and

(d) inserting [a] said third instrument in the root canal and rotating the instrument to thereby enlarge the root canal in a portion of the root canal closer to the foramina thereof into a continuous taper of a size corresponding to the continuously tapered working length of said third instrument, the continuously tapered working length of said third instrument having a smaller average diameter than the average diameter of the continuously tapered working length of said second instrument.

13. (Canceled).

14. (Canceled).

15. (Canceled).

16. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein each instrument has three cutting edges on the short enlarged continuously tapered working length thereof formed by three flutes thereon.

17. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein each instrument has six cutting edges on the short enlarged continuously tapered working length thereof formed by three flutes thereon.

18. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the cross-sectional shape of the short enlarged continuously tapered working length of each instrument is triangular with concave sides, triangular, square or polygonal.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Canceled).

21. (Canceled).

22. (Canceled).

23. (New) A set of instruments of progressively smaller sizes adapted for use in performing root canal therapy comprising:

said set of instruments comprising at least three endodontic instruments;

each endodontic instrument has an elongated shaft including a proximal end and a distal end; and

each endodontic instrument of said set of instruments has a relatively short, enlarged, continuously tapered working length formed on the shaft adjacent to the distal end of said shaft, said working length being tapered from its upper end to its lower end, having a diameter at its upper end that is greater than the diameter of said shaft throughout the length of the remainder of said shaft, the length and taper of said working length of each endodontic instrument in said set is identical, the distal end of each instrument is a bi-conical shape for guiding the distal end and the short enlarged continuously tapered working length of the instrument in the direction of the root canal axis, said working length carries at least one cutting edge wherein said cutting edge runs from said bi-conical shape to the upper end of said working length, wherein said set of instruments has a first endodontic instrument and wherein the working length at least one other endodontic instrument in said set is smaller than said first endodontic instrument.